

MICHIGAN INITIATIVE TO REDUCE UNDERAGE DRINKING

The initiative includes the programs described below. Youth and parents are the most important components of the initiative and are active in communities throughout Michigan. By educating themselves and reaching others, they are creating the social changes which will achieve underage drinking prevention goals. Anyone can get involved and use the resources of these programs.

Michigan Coalition to Reduce Underage Drinking (MCRUD) Steering Committee

The Michigan Coalition to Reduce Underage Drinking provides leadership on state and national issues and assists individuals, grassroots groups, and organizations to reduce underage drinking locally. The Steering Committee meets monthly to coordinate efforts within the initiative. They emphasize community level approaches and the meaningful involvement of youth in all aspects of addressing underage alcohol use.

The Steering Committee has adopted a “MCRUD Agreement.” This outlines factors contributing to underage drinking and a range of strategies to address these which target the environment as well as individuals. The Agreement is available for local communities to endorse and adopt strategies from. MCRUD can provide assistance and resources for carrying out strategies.

MCRUD Regional Coalitions

Several regional coalitions have received funding, training, and technical assistance through the initiative and continue their efforts with local support. In their communities they are addressing environmental issues related to underage alcohol use—law enforcement, availability, adult role modeling, media influences, and so forth. They are a significant resource to others who want to become involved.

MCRUD Teen Leaders

MCRUD works with teen leaders from around Michigan. They work with local youth groups to carry out projects that will create change in their communities and contribute to a “groundswell” that reduces underage drinking factors statewide.

Grants to Address Underage Drinking

Through Prevention Network, Underage Drinking Prevention grants to \$2500 are available to address the underage drinking issues in a given community. Youth should be substantially involved in planning and carrying out funded projects.

Reaching 18-21 Year Olds in the Workplace

Youth who are underage but out of high school and not in college are a challenge to reach with prevention. MCRUD funded a model project which succeeded in doing this through a team of management and youthful employees at a grocery store in the VG’s Market chain. A manual and training are available for replication of this project.

Michigan Campus and Community Coalition for Prevention

The Michigan Campus and Community Coalition for Prevention is a statewide leadership initiative addressing alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, and violence on Michigan campuses. The Coalition is open to individuals, organizations, campus administrators, law enforcement and judicial personnel, and campus/community coalitions. This leadership initiative addresses underage and high risk drinking by Michigan college students.

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Prevention Network partners through the Coalition with the Michigan region of The Network Addressing Collegiate Alcohol and Other Drug Issues to schedule meetings and trainings that focus on prevention issues. These issues include: reducing underage drinking; changing college drinking norms; building effective campus/community coalitions;

and complying with federal requirements for informing students of alcohol and other drug health risks, federal and state laws, campus policies, and alcohol and other drug resources.

The Coalition supports “Campus Connections,” a program committed to helping entering freshmen make a successful transition to college without alcohol, tobacco or other drugs. Informational brochures for students and parents are available from Prevention Network.

Law Enforcement Programs

Law enforcement agencies in Michigan receive grant funding each year to pay for overtime enforcement of underage drinking laws. These programs emphasize education and prevention to discourage minors from consuming and attempting to consume alcohol and also encourage retailers, festival organizers, school and community leaders to prevent underage drinking as well.

Involvement of Judges and Prosecutors

Resources have been developed to meet the need for training prosecutors and judges on minor-in-possession alcohol laws and related issues, social and legal consequences for youth, best practices being used throughout the state, alternative sentencing and the consequences of plea bargaining. Another program, “Courageous Decisions” uses video based discussions with youth and actual conducting of court sessions within middle and high schools to encourage healthy decisions and understanding of the consequences for poor decisions. In conjunction with this program, “Courageous Persuaders” gives high schoolers a chance to make a TV commercial aimed at middle schoolers warning them about the dangers of underage drinking.

Public Information and Education

Alcohol Awareness Month and Other Public Information and Education

MCRUD has adopted April—National Alcohol Awareness Month—as a specific time for raising public awareness. An organizers’ packet is available suggesting activity for April and year round. This includes background information, project ideas, and materials for involving media, talking with legislators, getting a local proclamation and more. A poster contest chooses a youth designed poster for distribution during the campaign.

Materials and training are available year around. Information directed to youth, college students, and parents is available from Michigan Resource Center, 800-626-4636. Materials specific to MCRUD and underage drinking issues are available through Prevention Network, 800-968-4968. Prevention Network also provides training that is free and adapted for each specific audience and the needs of local communities in addressing their underage drinking issues and seeking environmental change.

Preventing Underage Drinking is Everybody’s Business

Ending underage drinking and associated harm will require the involvement of citizens in every community. Many organizations in Michigan focus on underage drinking prevention. Concerned individuals can join these efforts. These organizations can also learn from each other and pool their strengths. MCRUD serves as a network to assist and connect people in Michigan who want to prevent underage drinking.

FOR CONNECTION WITH MCRUD OR OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE UNDERAGE DRINKING PREVENTION INITIATIVE IN MICHIGAN, CONTACT MCRUD COORDINATOR KEN DAIL AT 800-968-4968 or kend@preventionnetwork.org.

Youth, Parent, Community, and Other Organizations

Many organizations in Michigan have focused on underage drinking prevention. Many of these have partnered with the underage drinking initiative and many continue to work independently at both state and local levels. Anyone concerned about underage drinking can benefit from connection with their local organizations and familiarity with other resources in the state. For referral, contact Prevention Network at 800-968-4968.

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